

Message Text

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ACTION LAB-06

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ADP-00 SIL-01 EB-11 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 RSR-01 COME-00 /042 W

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R 120901Z JUL 73

FM AMCONSUL NAHA

TO AMEMB TOKYO

SECSTATE WASHDC 1143

INFO OAC FORT BUCKNER OKINAWA

MARCORB CAMP BUTLER OKINAWA

USFJ FUCHU JAPAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L NAHA 285

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MARR, JA

SUBJ: BASE LABOR - MARINE MESS HALL CONTRACT

SUMMARY: OKINAWA PREFECTURAL GOVERNMENT PRESENTED PETITION CONCERNING THE USMC DECISION NOT TO RENEW ITS MESS HALL CONTRACT INVOLVING NEARLY 900 JAPANESE WORKERS, PARTICULARLY STRESSING NEED FOR ADVANCE NOTICE. PROTESTS ARE CONTINUING WITHOUT INCIDENT. USG SHOULD MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO PROVIDE AMPLE NOTICE OF CONTRACT WORK FORCE REDUCTIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. MAEDA CHOFUKU, DIRECTOR OF OKINAWA PREFECTURAL BUREAU OF LABOR, COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY, CALLED AT CONGEN JULY 11TH TO PRESENT A PETITION CONCERNING THE USMC DECISION NOT TO RENEW ITS

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MESS HALL CONTRACT. THE PETITION WAS APPARENTLY IDENTICAL TO ONES EARLIER PRESENTED TO VARIOUS GOJ MINISTRIES AND REQUESTED THE PERMANENT OR TEMPORARY CONTINUATION OF THE MESS HALL CONTRACT, IMPROVEMENT OF CONTRACT CONDITIONS, TRANSFER OF CONTRACT WORKERS TO THE MASTER LABOR CONTRACT OR TO THE INDIRECT HIRE AGREEMENT, AND AT LEAST SIX MONTH NOTICE BEFORE THE TERMINATION OF CONTRACTS.

2. IN HIS ORAL PRESENTATION MAEDA STRESSED THE ISSUE OF PRIOR NOTIFICATION OF CONTRACT TERMINATION NOTING THAT IN THIS CASE NEITHER THE CONTRACTOR NOR THE EMPLOYEES KNEW UNTIL JUNE 27TH THAT
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CONTRACT WOULD NOT BE RENEWED ON JULY 1ST. HE STATED THAT MOST OF

THE OKINAWANS AFFECTED ARE COUNTRY WOMEN WHO WILL HAVE GREAT TROUBLE FINDING NEW JOBS. MAEDA SEEMED SINCERELY SURPRISED WITH EXPLANATION HE HAD ALREADY RECEIVED FROM THE USMC THAT THE COMMAND ITSELF LEARNED OF THE BUDGET REDUCTION ONLY ON JUNE 27TH.

3. SMALL GROUPS OF PICKETS HAVE BEEN GATHERING DAILY AT USMC BASES, BUT THERE HAVE BEEN NO INCIDENTS. THE PREFECTURAL ASSEMBLY REPORTEDLY WILL SEND A DELEGATION TO TOKYO WHICH WILL PROBABLY ALSO CALL ON THE EMBASSY.

4. COMMENT: DESPITE THE SYSTEM OF YEARLY CONTRACTS, MANY OF THOSE AFFECTED HAVE BEEN WORKING STEADILY FOR YEARS FOR THE U.S. FORCES UNDER ONE CONTRACTOR OR ANOTHER, AND THEY ARE IN FACT OFTEN THE TYPE OF LABORER WHO FINDS IT HARD TO GET ALTERNATIVE EMPLOYMENT.

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THEIR PLIGHT ATTRACTS WIDESPREAD SYMPATHY FROM THE PUBLIC AND OKINAWAN GOVERNMENT. WHILE U.S. LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES WITH RESPECT TO THE CONTRACT LABOR FORCE ARE LIMITED, LATE NOTICE OF NON-RENEWAL OF CONTRACTS RESULTING IN LOSS OF JOBS PUTS U.S. COMMANDERS AND OFFICIALS IN A DIFFICULT AND EMBARRASSING POSITION. CUTTING BACK OF SUCH CONTRACT HELP SEEMS TO BE AN INEVITABLE PROCESS GIVEN U.S. BUDGET PRESSURES, BUT THE DAMAGE HERE WILL BE MINIMIZED IF EVERY EFFORT IS MADE AT HIGHER LEVELS TO MANAGE THE CONTRACTS SUCH AS TO ALLOW AMPLE NOTICE TO THOSE WHO WILL LOSE THEIR JOBS.

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